

**PRS 'heated' peace talks hit stalemate**  
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The reconciliation talks between the two rival factions in the crisis-ridden Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) got off to a bad and shaky start last night in Kuala Lumpur.

The talks broke off after midnight without any concrete or conclusive outcome after both sides appeared to refuse to yield from their positions, according to sources.

There is no indication when the next round of talks will be held or whether it will be held at all.

Malaysiakini learnt that notice for the meeting was a short one after Chief Minister and Sarawak Barisan Nasional chairperson Abdul Taib Mahmud directed the two factions to reach a compromise to save the party.

Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) state assemblyperson for Asajaya Abdul Karim Hamzah was the mediator.

Representing the faction supporting embattled PRS president James Masing were Dublin Unting, a state assistant minister, Billy Abit, the Hulu Rajang MP, Patrick Sibat and Tedewin Ngumbang.

The rival faction supporting deputy president Sng Chee Hua was represented by Larry Sng, a state assistant minister and Sng's son, Jimmy Donald, Sri Aman MP, Audie Chua and David God.

**'A lot of sparks'**

A Sng faction member who asked not to be identified told malaysiakini that there were a lot of sparks and the talks were non-conclusive, without any indication when the next round of talks would take place or whether it would transpire at all.

Both sides apparently refused to yield any of their present positions.

The Masing side made it clear that there could not be a compromise without Masing forming part of the compromise formula.

But the Sng faction said Masing was expelled from the party because of the 'many mistakes' he made, including sacking six supreme council members which the Registrar of Societies (ROS) later confirmed to be against the party constitution as he did not give any notice for the sacking.

The Sng faction also complained to the ROS and lodged a police report against Masing, who is a state minister, for publicly displaying the party's new logo in Miri in January without the prior approval of the ROS.

The ROS had written a letter to the party to say that it recognised only one party headquarters, that was at Green Heights near the Kuching International Airport which is

used by the Sng faction, and not at Pending where the Masing faction set up another headquarters.

The ROS also asked the local council to remove the signboard from the PRS office in Pending but the council has not taken any action so far.

### **'Racial' remarks**

The same source from the Sng faction also said that members of the Masing faction became 'hot' when it was suggested that they (the Sng faction) was coming to invite them to attend the party's first-ever triennial delegates conference (TDC) in Kuching on March 30.

The reply was that they already had their TDC in Sibu on Dec 2, 2006 and elected their office-bearers.

At one point, the meeting turned out to be quite acrimonious, according to the source, with the Masing faction trying to portray their rivals as 'the bad boys' and at another point it became 'racial' with the insinuation that PRS is a rural or Dayak-based parties since all but one of its elected representatives are Dayak.

This was not well received by the Sng faction who has always insisted that although PRS elected reps were all but one Dayak, the party was a multi-racial party based on its constitution.

A member of the Masing faction who also asked not to be identified refused to say that the talks were 'a total waste of time or failure' but confirmed that it was non-conclusive. He also said he did not know when the talks would resume or whether it would take place at all.

Last night's meeting followed the abortive talks that were supposed to be held earlier this month in Kota Kinabalu.

Malaysiakini understands that it is likely that Taib would make a last-minute plea for the two faction leaders to find a final solution to the party's crisis which has been going on for more than a year.

He indicated that if they should fail to do so, then he would leave it to the ROS to handle the matter.

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